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Implementation of the UNECE Statistical Programme 2014

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Report of the Meeting on the Management of Statistical Information Systems

Summary

The Meeting on the Management of Statistical Information Systems was held in Dublin, Ireland and Manila, Philippines from 14-16 April 2014, as part of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistical Programme 2014-2015.

The present document is the summary report of that meeting and is provided to inform the Conference of European Statisticians of the organization and outcomes of the .meeting.

GE.15-10810 (E)

1510810

Please recycle

1. The Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD/ESCAP Meeting on the Management of Statistical Information Systems (MSIS) was held in Dublin, Ireland, and Manila, Philippines from 14 to 16 April 2014. Participants from the following countries attended the meeting in Dublin: Albania, Australia, Azerbaijan, Canada, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong China, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States of America. The European Commission was represented by Eurostat. Representatives from the following international organizations also attended: Institute for Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS 21), and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

2. The agenda of the meeting consisted of the following substantive topics:

(a) How information and communication technologies can contribute to changing organizational culture;

(b) Standards-based modernization;

(c) Innovation;

(d) Architecture.

3. Mr. Rune Gløersen (Norway) was elected Chairman of the meeting. The substantive part of the work was organized by: Messrs. Joe Treacy, (Ireland), Joseph Parsons, (United States of America) and Ms. Christine Wirtz, Eurostat for Topic (a); Messrs. Trevor Fletcher (OECD, Eric Hermouet and Marko Javorsek (ESCAP) for Topic (b); Messrs. Marton Vucsan (Netherlands) and Carlo Vaccari (Italy) for Topic (ci); and Messrs. Robert McLellan (Canada) and Patrick Hadley (Australia) for Topic (d). Mr. John Dunne (Ireland) was Organizer/Chair of the Panel discussion on the implementation of a Common Statistical Production Architecture.

4. Mr. Padraig Dalton, Director General, Central Statistics Office of Ireland gave a keynote address, highlighting some of the challenges facing official statistics. He stressed the importance of modernisation and collaboration to address these challenges. He introduced the work of the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Statistical Production and Services in this area, and highlighted the importance of leaving a sound legacy for future generations of official statisticians.

5. Meeting documents are available at http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=33625#/ .

6. The draft report was adopted by the participants before the close of the meeting.

7. In his summary, the chair reminded participants that this was the last MSIS meeting, and reflected on the achievements of the MSIS meetings over the years, recognising that many of the foundations for statistical modernisation were developed out of ideas discussed at MSIS meetings. As a new format for meetings on this topic is developed, it will be important not to lose the strengths of the MSIS group, and particularly the close network that has developed. He noted that Mr. Jean-Pierre Grandjean (France), who has contributed to the work of this group and its predecessors over many years, would shortly retire, and wished him well on behalf of the participants,. Finally, he thanked the organising committee, the UNECE Secretariat, and the staff of the Central Statistical Office and Dublin Castle for their contributions to ensuring a successful meeting.

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Addendum

Report of the Work Session on Statistical Data Editing

Summary

The Work Session on Statistical Data Editing was held held in Paris, France, from 28 to 30 April 2014 as part of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistical Programme 2014-2015.

The present document is the summary report of that meeting and is provided to inform the Conference of European Statisticians of the organization and outcomes of the meeting.

GE.15-10812 (E)

1510812

Please recycle

1. The Work Session on Statistical Data Editing was held in Paris, France, from 28 to 30 April 2014 at the invitation of National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE). It was attended by participants from: Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the United States of America. The European Commission was represented by Eurostat. Representatives from the following international organizations also attended: Eurasian Economic Commission (EURASEC), International Labour Organization (ILO), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

2. The agenda contained the following substantive topics:

(a) Getting the support of all people when implementing data editing

(b) Selective editing / macro editing

(c) New and emerging methods

(d) Editing of census and social data

(e) International collaboration and software & tools

3. Mr. Steven Vale (UNECE) opened the meeting by stressing the changes in official statistics, with much interest in the official statistical community on concepts such as modernisation, big data and data revolution. Data editing is at the heart of many of these changes, as there remains a need to ensure data are fit for use. However data editing needs to evolve and this would be a common theme throughout the Work Session.

4. Ms. Fabienne Rosenwald, Director of Business Statistics, welcomed participants on behalf of INSEE. She spoke about the need for standardisation of editing processes across statistical domains, and the need to respond to new data sources.

5. Mr. Claude Poirier (Canada) was elected Chairman of the Work Session. He stressed quality of the papers, and that the whole statistical community would benefit from that. He outlined the need for a future work programme that meets the needs of participating organisations as far as possible. He invited volunteers to propose a list of topics for future work. Mr. Emmanuel Gros (France), Ms. Sarah Giessing (Germany), Mr. Gergely Horvath (Hungary), Mr. Marco Di Zio (Italy) and Mr. Sander Scholtus (Netherlands) agreed to take on this role.

6. The proposals for future work included:

(a) Selective and macro-editing

- Quality assessment of selective editing
- Unification of selective editing approaches
- Selective editing for classification variables
- Treatment of issues relating to statistical units in business statistics
- Highlight complementarity between selective editing and macro-editing
- Case studies

(b) Managing and supporting changes related to editing and imputation

- Managing/monitoring the editing and imputation process
- Managing changes to the editing and imputation process
- Managing cultural changes

- Getting new methods implemented
- Standardization/harmonization

(c) Software tools and international collaboration

- Software development
- Collaboration with information technology specialists
- SAS vs R
- Standardization/harmonization on an international level

(d) Evaluation and feedback

- Indicators for editing and imputation
- Using information from editing and imputation to improve the statistical process
- Estimation of uncertainty due to editing and imputation

(e) Editing and imputation with non-traditional data sources

- Editing and imputation for administrative data
- Editing and imputation in combination with Big Data
- Editing and imputation with multi-source data
- Editing during electronic data collection

(f) New and emerging methods

- Methods related to editing and imputation that are either new or emerging (or both)
- Innovative applications of existing methods

(g) Development of a common, generic process framework for statistical data editing. This could be done by a task team under the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Statistical Production and Services, and presented at the next Work Session.

7. Mr. Gergely Horvath, on behalf of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, offered to host the next Work Session on Statistical Data Editing in Budapest in autumn 2015.

8. All background documents and presentations for the meeting are available on the website of the UNECE Statistical Division (http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2014.04.sde.html).

9. The participants adopted the present report before the Work Session adjourned.

10. The Chairman thanked INSEE for the excellent facilities, the Organising Committee for preparing the content of the Work Session, the participants and authors of papers for their contributions, and the UNECE Secretariat for their support.

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Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Report of the Rosstat/EFTA/UNECE High-level Workshop on Modernization of official Statistics

Summary

The State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation (ROSSTAT), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), jointly organized a High-level Workshop on "Modernization of Official Statistics" which took place on 10-12 June 2014 in Nizhny Novgorod, Russian Federation, with the financial support of the Russian Federation and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

The objective of the workshop was to discuss, with the Heads of national statistical organizations and senior staff with responsibility for statistical infrastructure, the standards needed to support statistical modernization activities, and advise them on how to implement those standards in practice.

GE.15-10393 (E)

Please recycle

I. Summary of the meeting

1. The State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation (ROSSTAT), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), jointly organized a High-level Workshop on "Modernization of Official Statistics" on 10-12 June 2014 in Nizhny Novgorod, Russian Federation, with the financial support of the Russian Federation and EFTA.

2. The objective of the workshop was to discuss, with the Heads of national statistical organisations and senior staff with responsibility for statistical infrastructure, the standards needed to support statistical modernization activities, and advise them on how to implement those standards in practice.

3. The workshop was attended by participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT) and the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) were also represented.

4. The workshop was opened by Mr. Georgy Oksenoyt, Deputy Head of ROSSTAT. Opening addresses were also given by Mr. Valery Shantsev, Deputy Governor of Nizhniy Novgorod, Ms. Valentina Nikiforova, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russian Federation, Mr. Gabriel Gamez, UNECE Regional Advisor in Statistics, and Mr. Steven Vale, Chief of Statistical Management and Modernization Unit, both from the UNECE Statistical Division. All speakers highlighted the importance of modernisation activities to maintain the relevance of official statistics.

5. The agenda contained the following substantive topics:

(a) Standards and Tools for the Modernisation of Statistical Production and Services;

(b) Standards for Data and Metadata Transmission and Documentation;

(c) Implementation of Standards and Tools in CIS countries and Mongolia: Taking Stock and the Way Forward.

II. Conclusions and next steps

6. The main points highlighted during the workshop included:

(a) Many of the countries present are already using some of the standards needed to support statistical modernization, particularly the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM);

(b) The importance of harmonization across different domains of statistics was stressed;

(c) Statistical modernization is not just an information technology issue, it needs to be addressed at the strategic level, including in strategic plans;

(d) User needs should be taken into account in modernization activities;

(e) It is important to motivate staff to accept change and to practice good communication;

(f) Micro-data access remains a challenge. It is difficult to harmonize the rules regarding confidentiality protection as these depend on national legislation which varies between countries;

(g) In some cases, changes to organizational structures within statistical offices are needed to support modernization activities;

(h) The difficulties of recruiting and retaining staff with the right competencies for working in a modernized statistical environment were stressed. Common training activities could help;

(i) It is important to convince governments that investment in statistical modernization is essential to ensure high quality statistics;

(j) Support from international donors can help, as long as this is fully aligned with the strategic development plan of an organization;

(k) Global Assessments of national statistical systems help to identify priority areas for modernisation activities;

(l) The need to apply international standards can be a good argument when requesting government funding for modernization;

(m) Censuses often provide opportunities for investments in new processes, methodologies and tools, which should be designed for re-use in other statistical activities;

(n) In reality, modernization needs to be opportunistic, taking small steps whenever the opportunity arises, to reach a longer-term goal;

(o) Territorial (sub-national) statistical offices should be fully included in modernisation activities as they will be strongly affected by the outcomes;

(p) Modernization is not a one-off activity; it is a continuous process which should be incorporated in strategic plans.

7. Proposals for follow-up activities included:

(a) More training, particularly at the expert level. This could include workshops, training of trainers (who will then train colleagues within their organizations), provision of on-line training materials, etc.

(b) Informal networking will be important to share ideas and experiences. Support from international organizations to facilitate this would be welcome;

(c) Ensuring that important documents relating to modernisation and standards are available in Russian.

8. All documents and presentations for the meeting are available on the website of the UNECE Statistical Division: http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2014.06.modernization.html.

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Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Report of the Work Session on the Communication of Statistics

Summary

The Work Session on the Communication of Statistics was held in Geneva, Switzerland from 18 to 20 June 2014, as part of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistical Programme 2014-2015.

The present document is the summary report of that meeting and is provided to inform the Conference of European Statisticians of the organization and outcomes of the meeting.

GE.15-10819 (E)
1510819

Please recycle

1. The Work Session on the Communication of Statistics was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 18 to 20 June 2014. Participants from the following countries attended the meeting: Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Republic of Moldova, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. The European Commission was represented by Eurostat. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Eurasian Economic Commission, Institute for Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD) were also present.

2. Ms. Lidia Bratanova of the UNECE Secretariat opened the meeting and outlined the role of the UNECE in implementing the work programme of the Conference of European Statisticians, of which this work session is a part.

3. Mr. Michael Levi (United States of America) was elected as the Chairperson.

4. Mr. Georges-Simon Ulrich, Director General of the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, gave a key-note speech on enabling stakeholders to use statistics. He highlighted the importance of having a user-driven approach, identifying stakeholders with the goal to help them use statistics. Mr. Ulrich stressed the importance of communicating statistical methodology to users to increase their understanding of the ways the data are collected. He also noted the value of statistical literacy and the importance of educating journalists and the public about statistics.

5. The agenda contained the following substantive topics:

(a) Statistical literacy

(b) Communication with respondents and evaluation of communication campaigns

(c) Quick wins on low and zero budget

(d) Good practices in electronic publications

6. All background documents and presentations for the meeting are available on the website of the UNECE Statistical Division: http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=33630#/.

7. The participants adopted the present report before the Work Session adjourned.

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Addendum

Report of the 9th SPECA Project Working Group on Statistics (PWGS)

Summary

The State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) jointly organized the 9th meeting of the SPECA PWG on Statistics in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 25 to 27 June 2014.

The document presents the outcome of the meeting *"Environmental Information Systems: from Environmental Indicators to the System of Environment-Economic Accounting"* (SEEA) addressed the call of the Rio+20 Summit (A/RES/66/288) and post-2015 agenda to provide support to governments in integrating relevant data into national statistics for monitoring sustainable development in all its dimensions and in particular for the green growth/economy and the preservation of ecosystems.

GE.15-10131 (E)

1510131

Please recycle

I. Summary of the meeting

1. The State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) jointly organized the 9th meeting of the SPECA PWG on Statistics in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 25 to 27 June 2014. This event also benefited from the participation and substantive contributions from Statistics Norway, TurkStat, Eurostat, the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT) and the Institute Cadaster (Russian Federation).

2. The topic of the meeting, Environmental Information Systems: from Environmental Indicators to the System of Environment-Economic Accounting (SEEA) addressed the call of the Rio+20 Summit (A/RES/66/288) and post-2015 agenda to provide support to governments in integrating relevant data into national statistics for monitoring sustainable development in all its dimensions and in particular for the green growth/economy and the preservation of ecosystems. This topic also responded to recommendations provided in Global Assessments of National Statistical Systems in the sub-region and the request of SPECA countries formulated in the 8th SPECA PWGS meeting to discuss prospects and challenges in the implementation of the SEEA.

3. The meeting was targeted towards Heads of national statistical offices/committees (NSOs) and Directors of environment/energy statistics of SPECA countries and Mongolia and was attended by representatives from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and, for the very first time, Afghanistan. In total, 35 experts from official statistics (producers) and ministries (users) participated (see attached list of participants).

4. The meeting was organized into 4 substantive sessions and one dedicated to the coordination of technical cooperation activities in the field of statistics. The agenda of the meeting, contributions and background documents can be found on the UNECE webpage: http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2014.06.speca.html.

5. The main outcome and conclusions of the 4 substantive sessions of the 9th SPECA PWGS meeting are the following:

(a) Raw and processed data for environment comes from multiple sources inside but even more often outside NSOs and therefore compilation of environment statistics and SEEA needs coordination of all data providers and producers of official statistics. Participants discussed current institutional arrangements across national statistical systems and identified several possibilities for addressing coordination challenges. In particular, it was generally agreed that establishing national environmental-economic accounts working groups involving users and data producers would be an important step. It was noted that the establishment of working groups at the national level would help create a common responsibility for the environmental-economic accounts and help to improve harmonization of data collection methods (e.g. methodology and classifications) across the statistical system. National working groups were also identified as an important tool for clarifying the roles for the various key stake-holders such as NSOs, relevant ministries and other providers of environment data. It is therefore essential to identify all existing data sources and stakeholders involved at the different stages of production processes. In some cases, relations and data exchange among stakeholders need to be specified through legislation or memoranda of

understanding. However, it was stressed that NSOs must remain the coordinators of environmental information systems.

(b) Compilation of SEEA requires a foundation of both environment data/statistics but also economic statistics such as the System of National Accounts (SNA). The Working Group recognized SEEA as a tool for further integrating and improving coherence of environment statistics that eventually can be used for many different analytical purposes. But SEEA implies a need for NSOs to find creative ways to link knowledge and experience related to the SNA with knowledge and experience related to producing data and statistics on the environment, energy, water, etc. The ultimate aim of this integration effort is the production of environmental information systems which support sustainable development policies of the countries. Modernization of statistical production, streamlining production processes and rearranging data collection in the way that information harvested can be used for multiple purposes can benefit significantly to the production of environment statistics.

(c) Participants acknowledged the importance of establishing priorities, such as SEEA modules, in order to focus resources towards a programme that can be sustained for producing a regular time series and involving continuous improvements to data quality. Priorities will differ according to national circumstances, but water and energy were recurring themes during the meeting that are likely to be among the initial priority modules for SEEA implementation for SPECA countries. Ratio indicators to show energy, water or emissions efficiencies/effectiveness are some of the first types of results when combining economic with physical data. Also for environmental indicators, it was proposed to focus on a set of international core indicators that would cover national requirements and most of the indicators requested internationally (e.g. UNECE indicators for EECCA environment monitoring and assessment).

(d) SPECA countries also stressed the importance of technical support from international and bilateral partners during the process of the implementation of the SEEA. Increased training opportunities will be an important input once national priority compilations are identified. Participants also agreed that opportunities for SPECA countries to share experiences with each other on how technical challenges have been overcome would be one of the best ways for building capacities. Targeted international seminars and training workshops involving technical experts from the SPECA region but also beyond could be useful as follow-up activities in the future in order to revisit some of the recommendations, solutions and challenges discussed during the 9th SPECA PWGS. It was agreed that this meeting should be considered as a "kick-off" for further activities in this specific domain and should not be restricted to SPECA countries.

(e) Another critical action point towards implementation of the SEEA and enhanced consistency and accuracy of environment statistics relates to advocacy among existing but also potential users. Participants acknowledged that advocacy is a task that could benefit from assistance from international and bilateral partners by facilitating preparation and exchange of advocacy materials, including examples of best practices for SEEA implementation and practical case studies of their applications for policy-relevant analysis.

(f) To conclude, participants insisted on the fact that National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) and related reviews and assessments should pay more attention to environment statistics and accounts.

6. The last session of the meeting (session 5) was dedicated to the coordination of technical cooperation activities in the SPECA region and in particular projects and programmes supporting the implementation of recommendations provided in Global Assessment reports of national statistical systems. In order to enhance effectiveness and efficiency of these activities, organizing institutions stressed the importance for partner countries to provide information on the annual donor coordination survey and the questionnaire on the follow-up of the implementation of improvement recommendations from the global assessments, both developed by Eurostat and UNECE. The main objectives of these surveys are to be able to properly plan technical assistance activities, to coordinate these activities and thus to avoid overlapping activities and gaps. UNECE insisted on the fact that the participation in these surveys is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of the 9th tranche of the UNDA project: Strengthening National Capacities for the Sustainable Development of Statistics.

7. The main outcome and conclusions of this session were the following:

(a) Beneficiary countries welcomed the UNDA project that would support their efforts to implement the recommendations of Global Assessments. Participants also insisted on the importance to link this project with other international and bilateral ongoing or planned initiatives (e.g. Eurostat, EFTA, ESCAP, WB, IMF, UNDP, UNFPA, and CIS-STAT).

(b) At the request of countries which are not covered by the UNDA project (Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan) it was decided that technical assistance and additional funds from partner organizations would be mobilized to fully integrate them in this project. Mongolia also mentioned its interest to participate. It is also expected that Belarus would like to join. Ideally, the project should encompass all EECCA countries and Mongolia.

(c) Participants acknowledged the importance of participating in the 2 surveys (coordination and follow-up) for the efficient planning and implementation of all technical cooperation activities and not only the UNDA project. Some countries in the SPECA region still do not participate and it was agreed that the way to improve coverage and accuracy of these surveys would be further discussed in the High-level Seminar for EECCA countries organized by Eurostat (with participation of EFTA and UNECE) in September 2014 in Chisinau (Moldova).

8. Participants thanked the organizers and the hosting country for the excellent organization of the meeting and the very constructive discussions and exchange of experience. It was agreed that the 10th SPECA PWGS meeting would take place in Geneva in June 2015, back-to-back with the 63rd plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (15-19 June 2015).

9. The material of the meeting is available at http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2014.06.speca.html.

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Addendum

Report of the Eurostat/EFTA/UNECE Strategic Management Seminar on Quality Frameworks

Summary

Eurostat, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) jointly organized a Strategic Management Seminar on Quality Frameworks in Bečići-Budva, Montenegro, from 10 to 11 July 2014.

The objective of the seminar was to follow up on a number of recommendations from the Adapted Global Assessments and Light Peer Reviews in the region which addressed the need for more comprehensive quality assurance frameworks and the introduction of systematic quality management activities.

GE.15-10590E

Please recycle

I. Summary of the meeting

1. Eurostat, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) jointly organised a Strategic Management Seminar on Quality Frameworks in Bečići-Budva, Montenegro, from 10 to 11 July 2014.

2. The objective of the seminar was to follow up on a number of recommendations from the Adapted Global Assessments and Light Peer Reviews in the region which addressed the need for more comprehensive quality assurance frameworks and the introduction of systematic quality management activities. Different quality frameworks and initiatives in the region and beyond were presented in order to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the various frameworks, to find similarities and differences in the approaches countries have taken and to exchange best practices and common challenges.

3. The seminar was targeted towards directors-general and quality managers of national statistical institutes (NSIs) of the Western Balkan countries and Turkey. Quality managers from the European Neighbouring Policy (ENP) East countries were also invited. Representatives from Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo[1], the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine attended. The seminar further benefitted from contributions from Croatia, Lithuania and Iceland (in absentia). In total, 25 experts attended the seminar.

4. The meeting was organised into four sessions that built upon each other. It started out with a presentation by UNECE on international developments in quality management, in particular the UN NQAF[2] and the GSBPM[3], and a presentation by Eurostat on recent quality initiatives in the European Statistical System like the 'Fit for purpose' statistics approach, the revision of the statistical law, and the new round of peer reviews. This was followed by brief inputs on quality management practices in all countries, which triggered an intensive and substantive discussion in the plenary. Four presentations on experiences with quality management frameworks (ISO[4] certification, TQM[5], EFQM[6], European Statistics Code of Practice) further fuelled the exchange of practices and challenges of implementing quality systems as well as discussions in two groups on the advantages and disadvantages of the various frameworks and the role of these in managing change. An input on the ESS Quality Assurance Framework by Eurostat launched the final panel discussion which reflected on the way forward and needs for technical assistance. The key messages and follow-up actions of the two-day meeting are outlined below.

[1] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution No. 1244 and the International Court of Justice Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

[2] NQAF: National (GENERIC) Quality Assurance Framework

[3] GSBPM : Generic Statistical Business Process Model

[4] ISO : International Organization for Standardization

[5] TQM : Total Quality Management

[6] EFQM: European Foundation for Quality Management

1. Key messages

(a) The countries are strongly committed to developing and strengthening the quality of statistics. They welcomed the timely opportunity to hear about experiences with several quality frameworks and discuss the various quality initiatives and activities that are being implemented in the region.

(b) Quality means first of all 'fit for purpose', not perfection. A 'fit for purpose' approach requires quality work on different levels adapted to the use and its context as well as the users and their needs.

(c) Generic models and frameworks are useful instruments to start a process and can be used as 'guideline' in order to develop the institution's own model that is adapted to the national circumstances. It was also recommended, however, to look for similarities with systems of other countries and to make good use of developments and best practices of others.

(d) The various frameworks all have their own emphasis and serve different main purposes. In order to select the most appropriate quality framework for a country, criteria need to be defined that reflect the situation in the country and the focus the country would like to put on certain elements of quality management. It was found that the GSBPM model was appropriate for a focus on organising production processes, ISO is a very well-known standard with a focus on documentation, EFQM is regarded as a framework targeted towards the top management while QAF is an exercise for change that focuses on all staff in the organization.

(e) There was agreement that whatever the framework is, the most important principle was to take a systematic and integrated approach towards quality management, starting with an analysis of the current situation. Once a framework is established, it needs to be broken down into a strategy with priorities, and a work plan with operating procedures describing who is doing what and by when, accompanied by work descriptions. It was stressed that a key to success is then to stick to the chosen procedures.

(f) Quality management goes beyond implementing a set of IT tools and drafting guidelines and handbooks. It needs to be streamlined into all statistical activities. In order to achieve this, it was regarded as essential to establish a quality culture on all levels of the organization, but particularly exemplified to staff through top management commitment.

(g) The meeting discussed the institutional set-up of quality management (QM) and the qualifications a quality manager needs to have. It was noted that although the set-up and size of a QM entity may vary – it can for example consist of a separate unit with several staff or of one quality manager who works with a quality working group or committee that consists of managers and/or experts from various units – the baseline message stays the same: the entity has to have full support of top management and the authority to put quality measures into effect. The quality manager, who might come from inside or outside the statistical office, will not only manage but will need to show leadership in the implementation of this strategically crucial activity. He/she needs to be a respected person in the office, who has both the hierarchical authority and the acceptance of colleagues to implement quality actions.

(h) Another critical feature of QM is how to get staff on board and prevent a certain fatigue after a couple of quality assessment rounds. It was proposed to actively involve staff in the process from the start through platforms where they can express their needs and ideas, suggestion boxes, an open door policy,

as well as by emphasising the real benefits like efficiency gains, sharing of good practices, addressing recurring problems at a higher level, etc. It was also stressed that continued training on all levels is necessary.

(i) The meeting acknowledged that the final decision on which performance indicators to select rests with the top management of an office. The selection of indicators will, however, differ according to national circumstances and priorities at a given time.

(j) Quality management does not stop at the doorstep of the NSI. Involvement of and advocacy with other producers of official statistics is key to a full implementation of a quality framework. Ideas to get them in the venture included setting up interagency working groups or organising common seminars and training.

(k) Participants acknowledged that advocacy is a task that could benefit from assistance from international and bilateral partners by facilitating preparation and exchange of advocacy materials, including examples of best practices and practical case studies of their applications.

2. Follow-up

(a) The EU Policy Group for Statistical Cooperation (PGSC), in its meeting on 30-31October 2014 in Antalya, will continue the discussion on the involvement of other producers of official statistics in quality management work and compliance with the Code of Practice;

(b) The UNECE, Eurostat and EFTA will consider the possibility to organize a seminar on quality management and compliance with the CoP involving both the NSIs and other producers of official statistics, possibly on a sub-regional level. This will be discussed by the organizing institutions of this seminar;

(c) The organization of a workshop on the European Statistics Code of Practice (similar to the one that was held for the ENP South countries' quality managers) could be considered for the region as well;

(d) The next Multi-Beneficiary Programme (IPA 2014) provides for a common project on Quality Management.

5. The report, the agenda, contributions and other material of the meeting are available at: http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2014.07.tc.html.